

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
July 7, 2004

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CONYERS CALLS ON BUSH TO STOP COMPLAINING ABOUT LACK OF CONFIRMED JUDICIAL APPOINTEES

Congressman John Conyers, Jr. issued the following statement regarding today's trip by President Bush to Michigan to discuss judicial nominations:

"Today, President Bush came to my home state of Michigan and complained that his judicial nominees were being held up by Democrats in the Senate. Did he mention that the Senate has confirmed 97% of the appointees put forward by the President? Or that the vacancy rate on the federal bench is the lowest in 14 years? Probably not.

Let me remind you of the type of nominees that the President has put forward, and name some of the very few who we as Democrats have stood firm against:

Priscilla Owen: Owen has consistently opposed the claims of injured and harassed workers and voted in favor of corporations that sold defective products. Owen also voted against environmental regulations and abortion rights, and until she was nominated by Bush, never voted to allow a minor to bypass parental notification. When Bush White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales was a Justice alongside Owen in Texas, he wrote that her dissent on an abortion-related case constituted "an unconscionable act of judicial activism." Owen was rejected by the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2002 but renominated by Bush in 2003.

Miguel Estrada: Estrada is a member of several right-wing activist groups and stated that he had not personally considered *Roe v. Wade* -- a ridiculous statement from a former Supreme Court clerk. Prominent Hispanic groups including the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus oppose Estrada's nomination. Luckily, his nomination was withdrawn.

Carolyn Kuhl: Kuhl supported tax breaks for Bob Jones University despite its ban on interracial dating, a position opposed in a letter signed by 200 of her colleagues. She wrote what a former Solicitor General called "the most aggressive memo" advocating the reversal of *Roe vs. Wade* in a case before the Supreme Court. Prominent environmental groups, in a letter to Senators, have warned that Kuhl's record on environmental protections puts Americans at risk.

Janice Rogers Brown: Rogers Brown's rulings and opinions are notable for several reasons: her take on discrimination and consumer rights; the liberty she takes with constitutional and civil rights; and her legal stretches to protect big corporations. As the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* has concluded, Brown's views are "far out of the mainstream of accepted legal principles" and she is "not qualified for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit."

And President Bush doesn't take "no" for an answer. He appointed the following two judges over the New Year recess, exploited a loophole, and gave these ultraconservatives a judgeship for life:

William Pryor: Pryor, nominated to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, opposes abortion rights, calling *Roe v. Wade* "the day seven members of our high court ripped the Constitution and ripped out the life of millions of unborn children." He has argued against the Violence Against Women Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Pryor also opposed a Supreme Court ruling that said tying prisoners to hitching posts was cruel and unusual.

Charles Pickering: Pickering, voted down by the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2002 and renominated by Bush in 2003, also drew scrutiny when he blurred ethical lines by pressuring federal prosecutors to show leniency to a convicted cross-burner."

